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❖THE❖OLD❖TESTAMENT❖STUDENT.❖

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WHEN new views are advanced concerning the Bible or its teachings they are met in two different ways. There are many who instantly seek to show how destructive they are, and warn all against accepting them on the peril of their Christian faith. There are others who, while not inclined to receive new views, ask whether they may not be reconciled with the faith of the church and be harmless as affecting the essentials of Christianity. Both of these classes of men are needful; does not one admire more the latter? The former class has too often driven men from the church by their denunciation of that which afterwards was received as true, and which candid minds had felt they must hold; while the latter has often kept within the bounds of the church those who otherwise would have gone off into unbelief. There is needed the same caution in dealing with questions of biblical criticism that one has given respecting evolution, who says, "Wise dealing with this question will consider not only how to keep Christians from becoming evolutionists, but also—a matter often overlooked, apparently, by those who write without weighing the full effect of their words—how to keep evolutionists from giving up Christ."

THE Old Testament is not Hebrew literature. This statement may appear startling; but it is true. The Old Testament is not Hebrew literature in the sense that the Iliad and the Greek Drama are Greek literature; or the Book of the Dead, Egyptian; or the Zend Avesta, Persian. If one desires simple Hebrew literature, the product of the Jewish mind, he will find it in the Talmud, Targums, and other Rabbinical writings. The writers of the Old Testament were more than mere Hebrews. Moses, David and Isaiah did not simply reflect national thought and feeling. They were inspired, were men to whom divine thought and feeling were revealed. When we

speak of the study of the Old Testament as literature, we mean, then, the study of the national dress and outward adornment of a body of divine truth. Such study is profitable and interesting, and very important. But is it not insignificant when compared with the study of the doctrine which this outward national dress contains? Renan has made a special study of the Hebrew Scriptures from the point of view that they are a national literature, and with what result? The divine truth has made so little impression upon him that he can write a play "the story of which, of a nun's debauchery the day before the guillotine, is as corrupt as can be well conceived, and its leading thought is that passions must run their course even if death stands at the door." Such debasing thought and philosophy may thus co-exist with the highest appreciation of the Bible as a literature. Turn now from Renan to those who have studied these sacred writings to find therein the voice of God speaking of sin, justice and mercy; and how great the contrast. Here belong such men as Luther, Calvin, Latimer, Knox, Wesley, together with the great rank and file of earnest Christian workers and believers. "The Old Testament is not the history of men's thoughts about God, or desires after God, or affections towards him. It professes to be a history of God's unveiling of himself to men. If it is not that, it is nothing; it is false from beginning to end. To make it the history of the speculation of a certain tribe about God, we must deny the very root of any speculations which that tribe ever had. For this root is the belief that they could not think of him, unless he had first thought of them; that they could not speak of him, unless he were speaking of them."

In the modern revival of biblical study there is danger that the Scripture by some may be studied only after the manner of Renan, or too exclusively as a national literature.

THE following letter will explain itself and serve as an answer to a number who have corresponded with the editor concerning the matter. It will be noted that Professor Stevens himself discovered the omission, but only when it was too late to make mention of it in the January STUDENT :

To the Editor of the *Old Testament Student* :

In the collation of passages in my recent article upon "The Bearing of New Testament Statements upon the Authorship of Old Testament Books," I inadvertently omitted a passage of importance: John 5:46,47, "For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for *he wrote of me*. But if ye believe not his *writings*, how shall ye believe my words?" I discovered this omission the day on which THE STUDENT went into the mails, but, of course, too late for change or comment.

I do not, however, regard the passage as inconsistent with the view presented in my article. No specific portion of the Pentateuch is here cited or alluded to. Doubtless the reference is to the types and shadows which pointed to Christ (cf. John 3:14), and to the general Messianic import of the Law and perhaps to some passage like Deut. 18:15 sq. (cf. Acts 7:37). The point which is here essential to our discussion is this: If the basis of the Pentateuchal legislation and prophecy is Mosaic, would it not be just as true that Moses wrote of Christ, as if he had written the Pentateuch in its present form? Or, in other words, does Christ in this language mean to refer to literary authorship as understood by us? or do his words make necessary any position beyond this, that Moses was an inspired law-giver and prophet, and that in the Pentateuch the Jews were confronted with his authority and testimony concerning the Messiah?

In the judgment of many this passage will form an exception to my statement: "There is not a passage (unless an exception be made in favor of Mark 10:5; see note on page 165) in which Christ explicitly states that Moses wrote a single verse of the Pentateuch" (page 168). Of course, by all the presuppositions of the discussion, I mean here the Pentateuch in its present form. I have not denied, but affirmed, that Christ in a few cases used language which is fairly equivalent to saying that there were contents of our Pentateuch which Moses wrote. But I said: Granted that his language implies *writing* on Moses' part, it does not necessitate the view that Moses wrote "the whole Pentateuch in its present form" (p. 167), but is satisfied upon the supposition that "only the fundamental legislation of the Pentateuch emanates from Moses,—that our complete 'books of Moses' are not the direct product of his hand" (p. 168). If John 5:46,47 would not be just as true and pertinent provided the supposition here made were the correct one, we should be pleased to see the proof.

But if any deem the passage a valid exception to my statement, as meant and explained, I am more than willing that they should have the benefit of its support for the view commonly called "conservative." It will be remembered that this part of my article confessed itself to be an *argumentum ad hominem* which, at most, had for its purpose to reduce to strict statement the matter supposed to bear upon the subject. After the most generous concessions to the traditional view are made the question returns: whether it is fair to apply Christ's language to literary authorship and whether the views of such critics as Delitzsch, who holds the documentary and post-Mosaic theory of the Pentateuch as respects its present form, while holding that it is Mosaic in its basis, do not as truly meet every requirement of our Lord's language as the view that Moses wrote the whole Pentateuch as it now stands. This is, as we insisted, the really decisive question and upon the tenableness of the former view will depend the faith of many, since substantially this view of the "books of Moses" is rapidly approaching, with all specialists, the force of demonstration.

GEORGE B. STEVENS.

AS in former years, the Reports of the Principal of Schools and of the Treasurer of the American Institute of Hebrew are published in THE STUDENT. It should be a matter of interest to all to know the work which has been done, and by whose aid this work has been accomplished. For lack of space, the reports are somewhat more

condensed than usual. As is shown, the work has steadily grown from the beginning, the past year being in many respects the most prosperous of the whole number. Now that four of the five years for which the Institute was organized have passed, the question naturally arises, What shall be done at the end of the fifth year? Shall the Institute discontinue its work? or shall it reorganize on a better and broader foundation? or shall it arrange to continue practically as it has done during the past? The answer to the first question has been a universal No. In view of what has been done, and of the constantly widening field, the sentiment is emphatically against any giving up of the work. Some suggestions have been made looking toward an enlargement of the work. Why should not the whole Bible be included? There is a greater demand for systematic courses of study (whether by correspondence, or in Summer Schools) in New Testament Greek, and in the English Bible, than for such courses in Hebrew. Why, then, should there not be an "American Institute of Sacred Scripture," with courses in all three departments? Much might be, indeed has been, said in favor of this; the chief difficulty would seem to be lack of energy and time for organization, and lack of money for carrying it on. The prevailing opinion among those most closely identified with the work is, that perhaps the best thing will be to go right on with a purpose and organization similar to that which now exists. If only money could be secured, a broad and comprehensive work in Bible-study could be inaugurated, the influence of which would within five years be powerfully felt in every city and town of the country. The time is ripe for an onward movement. Where are those who are able to support such an undertaking?

THE first paper in the Pentateuchal discussion (by Professors Harper and Green, in *Hebraica*) has, after considerable delay, put in an appearance. It is a presentation of the analysis of the first twelve chapters of Genesis, with the facts and considerations urged in its favor. It shows that, according to the analysts, there are two distinct stories not only (a) of the creation, but also (b) of the descendants of Adam to Noah, (c) of the deluge, (d) of the peopling of the earth. It shows that in each of these series of stories there is to be found a peculiar vocabulary, and a peculiar style; and that the writers, though describing the same events, use different material and have different theological conceptions. The article shows not only the dry facts and figures of the analysts, but also their spirit, their attitude towards the material as a whole, or in other words, the way in which

they interpret all this material. The greatest part of the matter of the article (sixty pages) can be understood by those who have no knowledge of Hebrew. The consideration of this material by Professor Green will be published in the following number of *Hebraica*. It is understood that the author of the paper (just published) in his presentation is seeking only to represent, as best he can, the views of those who accept the analysis, and that the statements given are made without any reference to the conclusions to which he himself may have come, which, as a matter of fact, are, in many respects, widely different.

WITH this number the third article in the series, considering the authority of the New Testament in reference to Old Testament literary and exegetical questions, is given to the readers of *THE STUDENT*. All will admit that the discussions have been able, independent, and helpful. Whatever view one may hold, it is helpful to know and appreciate other views. We have no sympathy with that spirit which dogmatically asserts: My view alone is correct; all others are false and pernicious in their influence, and do not deserve consideration. The fact is, one may hold his view all the more firmly after having come to know something of the views of others. The most striking feature of these discussions has been the simplicity and candor which have characterized them. The position taken in President Hovey's paper will generally be regarded as the most satisfactory. And yet the number of careful students in the ministry of to-day, who have been, as they themselves would put it, compelled to accept one of the other positions, is surprisingly large. After all, as in the majority of discussions, the matter rests largely upon the particular way in which the question is put. Suppose each of these theories is stated as follows:

1. Jesus and the Apostles knew of the Old Testament only what other men of their times knew; their authority therefore, in their statements regarding it, is of no more value than that of any other writer of the times.

2. Jesus and the Apostles knew the real facts concerning the literary character and the authorship of all these books; but they saw their inability to accomplish anything in disseminating the truth in respect to these matters. They therefore prudently decided to appear to accept what they knew to be false; and built all their teachings upon this false basis.

3. Jesus and the Apostles knew the truth concerning these writings; they expressly declare the Pentateuch, for example, to have

been written by Moses, the One-hundred-tenth Psalm to have been written by David. These portions, therefore, must be considered to have been so written. The mere raising of the question is a denial of the foundation-principle of Christianity; for if it were to be shown that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, or David the One-hundred-tenth Psalm, the veracity of Jesus is impugned, and modern criticism is substituted for his divine assertions.

Each of these theories, in the form stated above, appears in its worst light; and yet those who hold the *first*, generally state the second and third in some such way; those who hold the second state thus the first and third; and those who hold the third do not hesitate to put the first and second in a form even more offensive, if such a thing is possible. Now, (1) no one of these statements fairly represents the school which is supposed to hold it. There may be a few radicals in each class who would take such extreme positions; but the number in any case is small. (2) A fair and full statement of each, for which there is not space here, including all the points which must be covered, would bring these three theories much closer together. (3) No statement, satisfactorily covering the facts, can be made which does not include, in some sense, all three theories; for how can it be denied that there is *a* truth in all three? (4) It is true (a) that Jesus and the Apostles were men of their times, employing in their interpretation the methods of their times, proceeding in their work from the knowledge possessed by their times; and it is also true (b) that they were in many respects far in advance of their fellows, knowing what they did not know, yet never introducing this supernatural knowledge except in reference to questions and upon occasions of the highest importance; in other words, accommodating themselves to the ignorance and even prejudices of those about them, and following in this the example set by God himself in his dealings with the always sinning Israel; but, true as both of these things are, it is still more true (c) that Jesus spoke with authority, and that, too, divine, whenever he spoke at all; and that his utterances, when rightly interpreted and understood, must be regarded as final. Much more might be said. History is but repeating itself. Three ideas, all necessary to a true conception of the matter in hand, have been separated: one school emphasizes and exaggerates one; another school, the second; another, the third. They do not seem to see that one of these ideas, standing by itself, is, at the very best, but half a truth, and that a true hermeneutics demands for exegesis not one, or two, but all three; and that a careful exegesis discloses and proves the existence of all three.